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MRS. ANNE HUTCHINSON

A PAPER READ BEFORE THE

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BY

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ANNE HUTCHINSON.

Francis Bacon, in his essay of Truth, translates and quotes with approval a saying of Lucretius, which may, not unfitly, stand as a Prologue, or a motto, to a paper which undertakes, after more than two centuries and a half, to review the salient incidents in the picturesque and painful career of Anne Hutchinson. "It is a pleasure," says Lucretius, "to stand upon the shore, and to see ships tost upon the sea; a pleasure to stand in the window of a castle, and to see a battle and the adventures thereof below; but no pleasure is comparable to the standing upon the vantage ground of Truth, and to see the errors, and wanderings, and mists, and tempests in the vale below."

That there were errors and wanderings, as well as mists and tempests, in the infant town of Boston during the years of which I am to speak, is certain; that they gathered largely about the person of Mistress Anne Hutchinson, if they were not wholly due to her active influence and her restless tongue, is equally certain; but it is not so certain that, even from our present vantage ground of truth, we can justly estimate either the provocation or the intolerance of the prosecution and punishment which she suffered. It is so difficult to enter intelligently into the conditions and the differences of a long-past generation that our judgments concerning them must of necessity be cautious and tentative.

Mistress Hutchinson made her advent to Boston in September, 1634. Her husband, William Hutchinson, bore her company; but while he counted for as much as his wife — and perhaps more — on the passenger

roll of the ship Griffin which brought them from England, History takes slight notice of him, and accounts him the weaker vessel. Governor Winthrop, whose judgment was generally candid and true, speaks of him, in his diary, as "a man of a very mild temper and weak parts, and wholly guided by his wife." But it must be remembered that Governor Winthrop wrote this after he had become somewhat familiar with the temper and the parts of Mrs. Hutchinson, and ginger may fairly be thought mild after a bell-pepper. I take it that Governor Winthrop's is a comparative, rather than an absolute, estimate of Mr. Hutchinson. At any rate it is certain that he had no sooner taken the "freeman's oath" and thus become a legal member of the colony, than he was forthwith made a deputy, or representative from Boston to the General Court,— a testimonial which we must estimate by the significance it had in those days rather than that it has in our own. Governor Winthrop says that he was "wholly guided by his wife," which is, perhaps, after all, only a magisterial and unsympathetic way of saying that he was loyal and devoted to her through all her conflict with the magistrates and the ministers. He stood unfalteringly by her side both before and after her banishment, and to the messengers of the church who were sent to expostulate with him on his attitude, he said with a modest firmness which does honor to his "mild temper," that he was "more nearly tied to his wife than to the church; and he thought her to be a dear saint and servant of God." He had so little share in his wife's controversies that there may be no occasion to refer to him again, and it is pleasant to take leave of him with the evidence which those words contain of his constancy to her.

The Bost[redacted] to which Mrs. Hutchinson came in 1634

was an unpretentious, not to say meagre, little town, giving no promise that it could ever be called, even in jest, and by one of its own poets, the "hub of the universe." It was less than half its present size, since the greater part of the Boston which we know is built upon land that has been laboriously "made." Winding footpaths, which have since petrified into so-called streets, connected the few humble dwellings with each other and with the single church which, considering the number and length of the services held in it, was perhaps the busiest place in the town. Religion, and religion in its most intellectual and theological aspect, was the common vocation of the people, and they hurried through what might be called the exacting chores of life in order that they might give themselves to frequent and protracted seasons of worship, and religious instruction, and theological disputation. These things must constantly be borne in mind, or the career of Anne Hutchinson becomes inexplicable and inconceivable.

The pastor of the Boston church at the time of Mrs. Hutchinson's arrival, and for many years thereafter, was John Wilson; and his associate, who was technically called the "teacher" of the church, was John Cotton. Both of these good men were so intimately connected with the unfortunate strife which Mrs. Hutchinson inaugurated, that something should be said about them.

John Wilson was one of the distinguished company that came across the sea with John Winthrop in 1630 and laid the foundations of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. He was a graduate of Cambridge University, and had been an esteemed preacher and pastor in England until he was suspended and silenced for non-conformity. He united with Governor Winthrop, Deputy Governor Dudley, and Isaac Johnson in forming the

Boston church, of which he was almost immediately ordained "teacher," and two years later, in 1632, he was chosen pastor of the church, and exercised that office until his death in 1667. Through the greater part of his pastorate, indeed through the whole of it except when the church was rent by the convulsions that arose through the influence of Mrs. Hutchinson, he was held in universal respect and veneration, and such was the confidence in the power of his faith that when he was drawing near to death many persons of note came,— some from a distance and bringing their children,— to receive his dying benediction. Cotton Mather says of him, in his Magnalia, "if the picture of this good and therein great man were to be exactly given, great zeal with great love would be the two principal strokes that, joined with orthodoxy, should make up his portraiture. Though he was, like John, a son of thunder against seducers, yet he was, like that blessed and beloved Apostle, also all made up of love."

John Cotton, the "teacher" of the church, had arrived in Boston in 1633, just a year before the coming of Mrs. Hutchinson. He was a more prominent and picturesque figure in the community than the pastor, Mr. Wilson, and for nineteen years he was the civil and ecclesiastical autocrat of the colony,— "the unmitred pope," as he has been called, "of a pope-hating commonwealth." He, like Mr. Wilson, was hounded out of England by Archbishop Laud because he was a Puritan. He was a graduate of Cambridge University, and had been head lecturer and dean of Emanuel College in that University, and subsequently for twenty years pastor of the great church of St. Botolph's at Boston until he was driven out by ecclesiastical persecution. More than one account has been given of the sermon which signalized Mr. Cotton's

public espousal of the faith and spirit of Puritanism, and the effect it produced upon his admirers. It was in, or about, the year 1612, and in the venerable church of St. Mary, in Cambridge, that this sermon was preached. It was an interesting and memorable occasion. The ancient edifice was thronged by an eager congregation made up chiefly of students, fellows and professors of Cambridge, who were drawn to the service by the brilliant reputation of the preacher, a member of their own university, a fellow of Emanuel College. He was now about twenty-seven years old, and half his life had been passed in the university. He had made for himself a distinguished name as a scholar. He had been made, successively, catechist, head-lecturer and dean of his college. He was master of the logic and philosophy then in favor, which formed so large a part of the curriculum of the university. He was a Greek scholar of more than usual erudition, and it is said that he could converse readily in both Latin and Hebrew. But his special gift, that which had filled St. Mary's church, on the occasion of which I am speaking, with an expectant audience of scholars, was the gift of preaching. His sermons, written with the captivating art of the rhetorician, and pronounced with the charm and power of the finished orator, were wont to draw forth an involuntary hum of approval and applause from his delighted hearers. But while his faith had been taking on the form of Puritanism, he had, at the same time, been growing dissatisfied with the character of his own preaching. It was too showy, too superficial, too much adapted to set off the glory of the preacher rather than of the Master whom he served. Now he faced his waiting congregation with a different and a deeper purpose. His sermon was the simple, heartfelt utterance of christian and evangelistic

fervor. His hearers, who had come together to enjoy once more their accustomed feast of wit and oratory, were surprised, disappointed, disgusted. No faintest indication of applause greeted the sermon as it fell from the lips of the transformed preacher. "They pulled their shovel-caps down over their faces," says one account, "folded their arms, and sat it out sullenly,— amazed that the promising John Cotton had turned lunatic or Puritan."

When the historic First church of Boston celebrated its two hundred and fiftieth anniversary, among the interesting exercises of the occasion was a poem by Dr. William Everett picturing the scene I have just described, and from it I quote a few lines.

"Sunday morning! Tower and steeple, chime confusing sweet with chime,
Call all Cambridge out to worship, in the hot-souled Stuart time.
Through St. Mary's dark-browed portal see the motley gownsmen press,
Blue and sable, white and scarlet, passions varied as their dress.

"Now they settle on their cushions, waiting for the rich repast
That shall wake applause for Cotton, loud as when they hummed him last.
Then as though the sultry noontide felt its clouds by lightning rent,
Leaps the text, the Baptist's warning, one short, dreadful word, 'Repent'"
Aye, "Repent!" no gorgeous fabric, quaint conceit or wit is there.
Classic tale or strain poetic, sweetly floating on the air;
But Jehovah's barbéd arrow, flashing from his servant's string,
Piercing every sluggish conscience with its unrelenting sting!

"O'er the crowd the preacher gazes rapt, as when on Mars's height
Saul of Tarsus looked unflinching up to Pallas' temple white:
From the black and scarlet gownsmen comes no loud approving hum;
Stern resentment knits their foreheads, sharp contrition holds them dumb.

Go thy ways, thou daring Cotton; Cambridge asks no word of thine;
Sunk in learnéd ease compliant, well content with Rimmon's shrine;
Leave thy Gothic halls by Granta, leave St. Botolph's lofty tower;
Set those names across the ocean, there where Laud hath lost his power;
And thy faithful word forever finds at length its due applause
In the hum of freeborn millions, ruled by Boston's gentle laws."

The university being closed to him, Mr. Cotton entered upon his twenty years' pastorate at St. Botolph's, and then followed his flight to New England,

> "To be a burning and a shining light
> Here in the wilderness,"

as Longfellow says of him in his New England Tragedies.

A much earlier poet than Longfellow, viz: the Rev. Benjamin Woodbridge, who wrote in the quaint conceits and figures of his time, is quoted in Cotton Mather's Magnalia as drawing this picturesque poetic portrait of Mr. Cotton:

"A living, breathing Bible; tables where
Both covenants at large engraven were;
Gospel and Law in's heart had each its column,
His head an index to the sacred volume;
His very name a title-page; and next
His life a commentary on the text.
O, what a monument of glorious worth,
When in the new edition he comes forth,
Without erratas, may we think he'll be
In leaves and covers of eternity!
A man of might at heavenly eloquence,
To fix the ear, and charm the conscience;
As if Apollos were revived in him,
Or he had learned of a seraphim;
Rocks rent before him, blind received their sight;
Souls levelled to the dunghill, stood upright."

It is little wonder that his coming filled the colony with exceeding joy. It was something that they had earnestly desired and prayed for. To honor him, and perhaps to attract him to these shores, they had given the name of Boston to their chief town, as that was the name of the town in the mother country where he had exercised his great gifts for the glory of God, and in the service of Puritanism. To Boston, therefore, he came, and was the chief magnet to draw Mrs. Hutchinson thither also. For she had enjoyed his ministrations in her English home, and had been nurtured by them in the faith; she had listened to his sermons and had been edified by them; she had weighed his doctrine, and had found it to be exceeding sound and of great spiritual efficacy; she had held communion with him on high religious themes, and her heart was drawn to him as a prophet of surpassing grace and truth. She came to the new world, therefore, that she might continue to enjoy his ministry, which promised more of stimulus and edification to her spiritual life than any other that she knew. Beyond the fact that she rejoiced in the preaching of Mr. Cotton and also of her brother-in-law, Mr. John Wheelwright, we know nothing about the life of Mrs. Hutchinson in her English home, except that she was the daughter of a non-conformist minister, a Rev. Mr. Marbury. She was a woman in middle life when she arrived in Boston, with traits of character, and habits of thought, and religious opinions fully formed.

Of course she and her husband made speedy application for admission to membership in the Boston church, and the records of the church show that Mr. Hutchinson was received on the 26th of October. Mrs. Hutchinson's admission was delayed for a week, to the 2nd of November, in order to give the authorities opportunity to enquire

more particularly concerning her views. For during the passage she had talked freely, and with characteristic assurance, upon religious themes, and had produced something of a stir among the passengers. In particular the Rev. Zechariah Symmes, who was subsequently pastor of the Charlestown church, had engaged in discussion with her and had probably been worsted by her quick wit and nimble tongue; for he testified in her trial that what he took notice of in his talk with her on the ship "was the corruptness and narrowness of her opinions." That sounds a good deal like the remark of a man vanquished in argument and unwilling to admit it. At all events, immediately on his arrival in Boston he gave notice to the Governor and the Deputy of Mrs. Hutchinson's eccentricities of belief, of her doctrinal speculations, and of her pretence to immediate revelations. This it was which caused the ministers and elders to delay her admission to the church, after her husband had been already received, and this it was which gave rise to the accusation later that she secured admission to the church by concealing or dissembling her opinions.

Once admitted to the church, however, and established in her own home, she quickly commended herself to the esteem and affection of the community, and particularly of the women of the community. She was a woman, not only of pronounced religious convictions, but of quick human sympathies; and she was as capable and efficient in her neighborly ministrations as she was warm-hearted. She was undoubtedly masterful in her bearing, but it was that restful mastery of bearing which is welcome in times of trouble and suffering. In the chamber of birth and of death alike she was present as a helpful and comforting minister to the physical weakness and the spiritual wants of her sisters. She was their nurse,

their confidante, and their sympathetic friend. Impressed as they must have been by her unusual mental gifts and her consecration, they were no less drawn to her by her unselfish and tender ministries, and by her eagerness and her ability to help them in those trying moments when help is most sorely needed. It is certainly to be regretted that there is no extant portrait of Mrs. Hutchinson, and none of the persons who have written so freely and frankly of her virtues and her errors, have left any hint of her personal appearance. It is perhaps reasonable to infer, therefore, that the influence she acquired was not due to her personal charms, but solely to her intellectual gifts, her fervent religious character, and her kindly human feelings, joined with an unusual capacity for practical helpfulness. Rev. Thomas Welde, one of the authors of the Bay Psalm Book, the minister of Roxbury and always an unfriendly critic of Mrs. Hutchinson, describes her as "a woman of a haughty and fierce carriage, of a nimble wit and active spirit, and a very voluble tongue, more bold than a man, though in understanding and judgment inferior to many women", but he feels compelled to say of her, in another place, that she was "a woman very helpful in the time of childbirth, and other occasions of bodily disease, and well furnished with means for those purposes."

Upon her arrival in Boston, Mrs. Hutchinson found that, in addition to the frequent public religious exercises at which both men and women were present, there were certain stated meetings of the brethren for religious discourse from which women were excluded. At these meetings of the men it was the custom to review and discuss the sermons of the preceding Sunday. Those sermons, no doubt, furnished sufficient material, and, to the Puritan mind, sufficient stimulus for such discussion.

The service, of which the sermon was the central and most esteemed feature, was expected to last from three to five hours. Upon the pulpit stood an hour-glass, and as the service went on it was the duty of the sexton to go up hour by hour and turn the glass over. Governor Winthrop speaks incidentally of a sermon preached at Cambridge by the saintly Thomas Hooker when he was not in his usual health. He proceeded, says Winthrop, in his discourse for fifteen minutes, then stopped and rested half an hour, then resumed and preached for two hours. It was customary for nearly every one to carry his note-book to church, and to write down as much as he could of the discourse. "The sermon," says Mr. Tyler, "was without a competitor in the eye or mind of the community. It was the central and commanding incident in their lives; the one stately spectacle for all men and all women year after year; the grandest matter of anticipation or of memory; the theme for hot disputes on which all New England would take sides, and which would seem sometimes to shake the world to its centre."

The meetings of the men, therefore, for criticism and comment and dispute upon the sermons to which they had last listened were occasions of the greatest interest and importance, and it must have seemed a special hardship to the women that they were excluded from the benefits and the excitements of them. Mrs. Hutchinson was not one to rest quiet under such a discrimination, and, with characteristic promptness she instituted a similar meeting for her own sex. These meetings at once became popular and drew together a large number of women, to whom, under the ostensible purpose of repeating and discussing the last delivered sermon, she expounded her cherished religious views, and compared the teachings of the various ministers of the colony.

As she had come to Boston mainly to enjoy the ministrations of Mr. Cotton, it was natural that her preference for him, and her strong approval of his preaching, should be emphasized by her. As a member of the Boston church she could not listen to his discourses as teacher without listening also to those of the pastor, Mr. Wilson. But of Mr. Wilson's sermons she did not approve; and in her private conversation with friends, as well as in the more formal meetings of the women, she did not hesitate to disparage and condemn his doctrine. Colleagues as he and Mr. Cotton were in the ministry of the Boston Church, and both of them held in affectionate esteem and veneration by their parishioners, the keen judgment of Mrs. Hutchinson detected a radical difference of religious teaching in their discourses, a difference which she probably exaggerated, and which she made the basis of a comparison in the highest degree unfavorable to Mr. Wilson, and at the same time destructive of the peace of the church. She affirmed that Mr. Wilson preached a covenant of works; by which she meant that he laid great stress upon the outward marks of a religious life, such as dress, deportment, observance of times and seasons, adherence to forms and methods,— all those external signs of sanctity and of separation from the world upon which the Puritan mind was accustomed to insist, and which were wont to be regarded as an essential and satisfactory evidence of inward righteousness, and of justification before God.

To such teaching as this Mrs. Hutchinson was openly and vehemently opposed. She held it to be the substitution of the bondage of the Law for the freedom of the Gospel. She called it "legalism," and regarded it as hostile to both the spirit and the teaching of Christianity. She ceased not earnestly to dissuade all who came within

the sphere of her influence against trusting to an outside righteousness, to the tokens of piety set forth in deeds and virtues. This was what she called a "covenant of works," and in opposition to it she urged an entire reliance upon the "covenant of grace," the free and personal witness of the Spirit, communicated from Christ to the heart of the believer. She maintained that the consciousness of union with the Holy Spirit, and a prevailing purpose of righteousness, would secure to the spirit of the believer a serenity not to be attained by the formalisms of piety. And it was such a "covenant of grace," with its freedom from austere restraints, its trust in an inward assurance, and its reliance upon divine grace communicated immediately to the heart,— it was such a covenant of grace, so she maintained, that Mr. Cotton preached. Accordingly she lost no opportunity to commend his sermons, and to disparage those of Mr. Wilson; and probably both the commendation and the disparagement were thorough-going and emphatic, and were made more intense by an infusion of personal partisanship to which human nature is ever liable, and perhaps feminine human nature particularly so. Such speculations or convictions might be expressed, and even with unction, in these days, without disturbing the relations between friends, or imperilling the peace of churches,— and certainly without threatening disaster to society and government. But our conditions are not those of the Puritan colony. "The distinction between the two covenants was vital in the view of Mrs. Hutchinson, and the moment the distinction is stated we instinctively perceive that it could not fail to bring into discredit the formal and methodical observances of the scrupulous forefathers of New England. The outward manifestations of piety were then much regarded and stringently enforced; perhaps their impor-

tance was exaggerated; they were certainly open to the charge of too much resembling display; for not only was a grave and reverent bearing expected, but austerity in looks, and sanctimoniousness in dress and phrase, were considered all essential."

Obnoxious as Mrs. Hutchinson's doctrines came to be, and necessarily obnoxious, she had been in New England two years before they excited special attention. It was not till October 1636, when for two years she had been doing her deeds of kindness, and holding her weekly meetings, and exercising her gifts of exposition and exhortation, and sowing seeds of dissension,— that Winthrop mentions Mrs. Hutchinson in these terms:

"One Mrs. Hutchinson, a member of the church of Boston, a woman of a ready wit and bold spirit, brought over with her two dangerous errors: 1. That the person of the Holy Ghost dwells in a justified person: 2. That no sanctification (by which he means no outward holiness of life), can help to evidence to us our justification." "From these two," he continues, "grew many branches, as (1) our union with the Holy Ghost, so as a christian remains dead to every spiritual action, and hath no gifts nor graces other than such as are in hypocrites, nor any other sanctification but the Holy Ghost himself." Then he adds that "there joined with her in these opinions a brother of hers, one Mr. Wheelwright, a silenced minister, sometimes in England." This Mr. Wheelwright had but recently come over to Boston when Winthrop wrote these words, and his coming served to precipitate the strife which could not long be delayed. He became a public expounder of the views which Mrs. Hutchinson held, and was, equally with Mr. Cotton, the subject of her commendation, and of invidious comparison with the other ministers of the colony. An earlier arrival than

Mr. Wheelwright's, in Boston, was that of Mr. Henry Vane, the son of Sir Henry Vane, the King's comptroller. He was heartily, and even enthusiastically welcomed by the colonists, who were filled with pride and hope in having among them the son and heir of à privy-councillor. Accordingly, setting aside from the chief magistracy the wise and moderate Winthrop, Henry Vane was elected, in 1636, Governor, "after so brief a sojourn as made it impossible that he should know the spirit and the position of those over whom, in all his immaturity of judgment, he was placed, by a haste and zeal which were not wise to say the least." Not only was he thus elected to the highest office, but the honor was accompanied by unusual demonstrations of popular interest, and by the discharge of volleys from all the ships in the bay. The difficulties that ensued were aggravated by this hasty measure; for Vane joined Mrs. Hutchinson, and his fall was, in a manner, identified with hers.

Such was the state of things, when public and anxious attention was drawn to Mrs. Hutchinson. The discovery, says Dr. Ellis, was like the discovery of a conflagration which was kindled at night, and behind a wall. Peace had reigned long enough to allow the leaven to work its way; and when the eyes of magistrates and ministers were opened, they saw at once the whole evil, which was then past their power to redress, though they set about it with all their zeal. All sorts of persons were found to have been attracted by her spells, and involved in her tenets. Cotton and Wheelwright among the ministers; Vane, the Governor, with such influential men as Dummer and Coddington among the magistrates; many of the deputies of the towns who had frequented Boston, with large numbers of the military and the yeomanry, were her abettors or disciples. "The watchwords of the new

party were heard at town-meetings, at trainings, in public worship, in family prayers, in the blessing before meat, and in the grace after meat. Children asked each other whether their parents stood for the covenant of grace or for the covenant of works."

"It came about," says Rev. Thos. Welde in his Short Story of the Rise, Reign and Ruin of the Antinomians, — "that those errors were so soon conveyed before we were aware, not only into the church of Boston, where most of these seducers lived, but also into almost all the parts of the country round about. These opinions being thus spread, and grown to their full ripeness and latitude, through the nimbleness and activity of their fomenters, began now to lift up their heads full high, to stare us in the face, and to confront all that opposed them." "Now," he exclaims, "oh their boldness, pride, insolency, alienation from their old and dearest friends, the disturbances, divisions, contentions they raised among us, both in church and state, and in families, setting division betwixt husband and wife! Oh, the sore censure against all sorts that opposed them, and the contempt they cast upon our godly magistrates, churches, ministers, and all that were set over them, when they stood in their way!

"Now the faithful ministers of Christ must have dung cast on their faces, and be no better than legal preachers, Baal's priests, popish factors, scribes, Pharisees, and opposers of Christ himself!"

And, indeed, there was much reason for Mr. Welde's book of lamentations. "The ministers in the colony were classified, and what had formerly been approved as most signal marks of piety were now looked upon as the mark of Cain. There was a wandering of church members from their own places of worship on the Sabbath,

either because their own preacher did not edify, or because another preacher did not. Some of the more zealous turned their backs and left the meetings when preachers whom they did not wish to hear stood up in the desk. Mrs. Hutchinson herself set an example for this offensive proceeding by leaving the meeting-house when the pastor Wilson was to preach."

"Now", wails Mr. Welde, "you might have seen many of the opinionists rising up, and contemptuously turning their backs upon the faithful pastors of that church, and going forth from the assembly when he began to pray or preach. Now you might have read epistles of defiance and challenge, written to some ministers after their sermons, to cross and contradict truths by them delivered, and to maintain their own way. It was a wonder of mercy that they had not set our Commonwealth and churches on a fire, and consumed us all therein."

Such were the elements of discord in Boston, elements that could hardly fail to breed strife in any community at any time. The opinions and practices of Mrs. Hutchinson and her partisans were offensive in themselves, and equally offensive in the manner of their exhibition. Before any public notice was taken of her, and long before any harsh measures were adopted against her party, the disturbing and mortifying and estranging effects to which I have referred had been brought about. If there had been no public proceedings against Mrs. Hutchinson and her friends the colony would still have suffered a dangerous conflict and division. These deplorable results cannot, therefore, be justly charged upon the interference or the severity of the public authorities. It must be remembered, too, that from the beginning of the controversy its political bearings and its seditious tendencies were foreseen. Church and state were in a peculiar

sense one in the Massachusetts colony, and the authorities were in constant dread lest they should lose their charter, the surrender of which was repeatedly and imperiously demanded of them. Nothing so much endangered their possession of the charter as reports of disorderly proceedings in the colony, and nothing had provoked so much disorder as the course of Mrs. Hutchinson and her followers. To quell the disorder, therefore, and to suppress the mischievous party was, in their view, as much a political as a religious duty. Beside they had reason to fear that the doctrine euphemistically preached as the covenant of grace might turn out with them as it had turned out in the old world, where the substitution of inward assurance for conformity to the law, under the name of antinomianism, had been followed by moral lapses and scandals of a most distressing character. They had reason, I say, to fear this result of the doctrine in Massachusetts, though it is but just to say that there was only one instance of such a perversion of the doctrine in the colony,— only one instance, at least, that is a matter of historical record. That was the case of the famous Captain Underhill, a doughty Indian fighter, who, when he was put on trial for his immoralities, affirmed that "he had lain under a spirit of bondage and a legal way five years, and could get no assurance (of his being justified) till at length, as he was taking a pipe of tobacco, the Spirit sent home an absolute promise of free grace with such assurance and joy, as he never since doubted of his good estate, neither should he, though he should fall into sin," — a condition that was fulfilled in his subsequent experience.

The continued political existence, and the moral health, of the colony, therefore, both demanded that the combined power of the magistrates and the ministers

should be exerted to the utmost to put an end to the most perilous condition of affairs that Massachusetts has ever known. This necessity was additionally emphasized, I should think, by an incident in the military administration of the colony. The Pequot Indians had become very aggressive and dangerous, and it was thought necessary to send a considerable force against them. But the levy of Boston troops refused to be mustered into the service because the chaplain, who had been chosen by lot to accompany the forces, was Mr. Wilson, and he was committed, in his preaching, to a covenant of works. If military operations were liable to be blocked by theological fastidiousness on the part of the soldiery, while a cruel and savage foe was lying in wait to scalp impartially the adherents of both covenants, there was but a gloomy prospect for the future of the colony.

Every consideration, therefore, of domestic peace, of public morality, and of secure political existence, seemed to demand immediate and vigorous action against the Hutchinson party. Governor Winthrop continued to stand firm against the suspicious and disturbing doctrines, and he was himself a tower of strength. He is justly characterized by Dr. Geo. E. Ellis as the wisest, most faithful counsellor, fosterer and ever loyal friend of the colony, the sincerest, purest spirit of the Puritan Theocracy. With him were associated, in determined opposition to Mrs. Hutchinson and her followers, Deputy-Governor Dudley, the Rev. John Wilson of the Boston church, and all the ministers of the neighboring towns, including Mr. Shepard of Cambridge, Mr. Welde of Roxbury, Mr. Symmes of Charlestown, Mr. Hugh Peter of Salem, and Mr. Philips of Watertown; of all these ministers Mrs. Hutchinson had said repeatedly that they were not "sealed," and were not "able ministers

of the New Testament,"— an expression of opinion which was not likely to conciliate them to her doctrines. Mr. Philips of Watertown regarded it as peculiarly unreasonable in her to include him in this general condemnation, because she had never heard him preach at all. Besides these ministers the majority of the deputies to the General Court from the towns outside of Boston were unfriendly to the Hutchinson party. That party, on the other hand, consisted of Mrs. Hutchinson, its moving spirit, Mr. Cotton and nearly all the membership of the Boston church, Rev. Mr. Wheelwright of the Mount Wollaston church and some of his people, and the entire body of Boston deputies and elders. Governor Vane was also a strong adherent of the party, but he returned to England while the conflict was in its earlier stages.

I must not attempt to detail the successive steps that led up to the trial of Mrs. Hutchinson. There were conferences of the ministers, public fast-days, and an imposing synod at Cambridge. Mr. Wheelwright was censured, and afterwards banished, for an alleged seditious sermon on a fast-day. Many members of the Boston church who signed a remonstrance against the action touching Mr. Wheelwright, were deprived of their arms and ammunition — an inconvenient and humiliating punishment — and a number of the more incorrigible remonstrants were banished from the colony. Mr. Cotton was examined as to his tenets and his teaching, and was able to give such an explanation of his position as to put him outside the Hutchinson party, and to retain his unquestioned standing in the community and the church. And at last came the trial of Mrs. Hutchinson herself before the Great Court of Massachusetts. She could not be left to the judgment of the Boston church of which she was a member, because the church itself

had gone astray, and was in open sympathy with this accused woman. Indeed the church itself was to be censured through the penalties inflicted upon her and others of its members; and the combined authority of the towns around Boston, with their ministers, was brought to bear against the heretical and seditious church of the metropolis.

It was in November, 1637, that the trial took place, the General Court then sitting at Cambridge. It was an impressive and pitiful spectacle. With all New England looking on, the combined powers of the government and the church were directed with hostile intent and manner against one poor woman of unimpeachable personal character. The Governor, the Deputy-Governor, the magistrates and the deputies were present. All the ministers of the colony were there, smarting under the reproaches which Mrs. Hutchinson had spoken against them, and determined to insure her humiliation. Besides these the building was thronged with friendly and unfriendly spectators. And when Anne Hutchinson stood up to meet the charges that were brought against her, the spectators saw a woman enfeebled in body and depressed in mind, but invincible in spirit as she faced the accusers, and stood on her defence before the assembled wisdom, and authority, and sanctity of Massachusetts colony. There were some features of special hardship too, which it is not pleasant to remember. No counsel was allowed her, nor the presence of any supporting friend; and she was compelled to stand until she nearly fell from exhaustion.

Governor Winthrop, by virtue of his office, conducted the prosecution, though the examination passed somewhat out of his hands as the trial progressed. A (fairly) full report of the trial, by an unknown hand, may be

read in an appendix to the History of Massachusetts by Thos. Hutchinson, a great-grandson of Anne, who in his impartial and judicious account of the controversy is far from espousing with ardor the cause of his famous ancestress. It appears from that report that various specific charges were brought against her, such as holding unlawful meetings at her house, supporting those who were under censure of the court (meaning Mr. Wheelwright and the Boston remonstrants), defaming the ministers of the colony, and promulgating opinions disturbing to the peace of the commonwealth. Against these charges Mrs. Hutchinson defended herself with a clearness and skill and self-reliance that compel our admiration. She was neither abashed nor outwitted, though she was surrounded by the venerated symbols of authority, and was hard pressed by the keenest intellects and the most practiced disputants of the colony, and was herself weary and worn by the various phases of the conflict through which she had already passed.

Deputy-Governor Dudley, the father of the gentle poetess, Anne Bradstreet, impatient at the slow progress of the prosecution by the discussion of specific charges, made this general statement of the case against her: "About three years ago we were all in peace. Mrs. Hutchinson, from that time she came, hath made a disturbance, and some that came over with her in the ship, did inform me what she was as soon as she was landed. I being then in place dealt with the pastor and teacher of Boston, and desired them to inquire of her, and then I was satisfied that she held nothing different from us; but within half a year after she had vented divers of her strange opinions, and had made parties in the country, and at length it comes that Mr. Cotton and Mr. Vane were of her judgment; but Mr. Cotton hath

cleared himself that he was not of that mind; but now it appears by this woman's meeting that Mrs. Hutchinson hath so forestalled the minds of many by their resort to her meeting that now she hath a potent party in the country. Now, if all these things have endangered us as from that foundation, and if she in particular hath disparaged all our ministers in the land that they have preached a covenant of works, and only Mr. Cotton a covenant of grace, why this is not to be suffered, and therefore being driven to the foundation, and it being found that Mrs. Hutchinson is she that hath depraved all the ministers and hath been the cause of what has fallen out, why we must take away the foundation and the building will fall."

This view of the case — as to the removal of the foundation — prevailed, and particularly after Mrs. Hutchinson had furnished the most serious and conclusive evidence herself by claiming "special revelations" as the justification of all that she had done. Accordingly the sentence of the court, as it stands upon the records of Massachusetts, was as follows:

"Mrs. Hutchinson, the wife of Mr. Wm. Hutchinson, being convicted for traducing the ministers and their ministry in the country, she declared voluntarily her revelations for the ground, and that she should be delivered, and the court ruined with their posterity, and thereupon was banished and in the meanwhile was committed to Mr. Joseph Welde (of Roxbury) until the court shall dispose of her."

The Mr. Joseph Welde to whose care she was committed, in order that her banishment might not be in the winter, was a brother of the minister who was one of her bitterest enemies. She was to be treated with kindness at his house, at the expense of her husband;

but only her particular friends and the elders were to be admitted to her, "lest the eloquence of persecution should double the power and the mischief of her gifts."

In the following March, after a winter's imprisonment, made doubly irksome by the repeated examinations and conferences and exhortations of the elders in the effort to subdue her to their own way of thinking, she was brought before the Boston church to answer to the charge of heresy in doctrine. It is true that she was not convicted, but neither was she converted, and therefore the church voted that she should be solemnly admonished. The duty of pronouncing the admonition was laid upon Mr. Cotton. It is recorded that "he laid her sin to her conscience with much zeal and solemnity; he admonished her also of the height of her spirit; then he spoke to the sisters of the church, and advised them to take heed of her opinions, and to withhold all countenance and respect from her, lest they should harden her in her sin." And these words she was compelled to hear from the minister whom she had followed in love and reverence to New England, and who had been to her a special prophet of grace and truth. But her trials were not yet over. A week later she was again brought before the church, and because she persistently denied having expressed or held an offensive opinion which was imputed to her, she was condemned for falsehood, and was excommunicated from the church. The venerable records of the First Church in Boston contain this entry: "The 22nd of March, 1638, Anne, the wife of our brother, William Hutchinson, having on the 15th of this month been openly, in the public congregation, admonished of sundry errors held by her, was on the same 22nd day cast out of the church, for impenitently persisting in a manifest lie then expressed by her in open congregation."

Thus excommunicated from the church, and banished from the colony, she went with her husband to Rhode Island, whither we cannot follow her, further than to say that, on the death of her husband four years later, she removed with her younger children to the Dutch settlement in New York, and became one of a little colony of sixteen persons. The Indians were then in open hostility with the Dutch, in pillage, burning, and massacre. In one of their raids, in 1643, the whole of this little colony of sixteen suffered the tragic fate of a savage massacre. The Indian custom of preserving the names of those they killed has made us know that Wampago himself, the owner of the land upon which the colony was settled, was the murderer of the woman whose life was so strange a mixture of consecration and conflict, of kindliness and contention, of happiness and suffering.

Necessary as her persecution and banishment may have been to the safety of Massachusetts colony, she yet cherished and taught an ideal of christianity more permanent than that of the stern Puritans who cast her out from their presence, and who verily believed that by that act they were doing God service.

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